

National Capital Region Inventory & Monitoring Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

25 September 2002
Center for Urban Ecology

List of Attendees

<u>Name</u>	<u>Park/Office</u>
Brian Carlstrom	PRWI
Karen Cucurullo	MANA
Doug Curtis	CUE
Ellen Gray	I & M NCR
Sybil Hood	I & M NCR
John Howard	ANTI
Dianne Ingram	CHOH
Marcus Koenen	I & M NCR
Mikaila Milton	I & M NCR
Dan Sealy (for Dottie Marshall)	GWMP
Jim Sherald	CUE
Christina Wright	I & M NCR

I. Welcome – Ellen Gray, I&M Coordinator, NCR

Purpose of the Board of Directors (BOD): To oversee the development of the National Capital Region's monitoring strategy in a way that preserves and enhances the region's most important natural resources.

Outcomes of this meeting: (1) Evaluate Phase I Monitoring Plan, (2) Decide if a network permit will be pursued, and (3) Evaluate Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan.

II. Update on NCR monitoring plan

Marcus Koenen, Monitoring Coordinator, gave a presentation on the progress of the monitoring plan. A Monitoring Workshop was held from July 9-11, 2002, at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV, and was attended by 111 participants from more than 30 different divisions within the Park Service and partnering agencies including universities, state and federal agencies, non-government agencies, and individuals. The workshop was designed to develop and enhance existing partnerships in order to preserve the region's most significant natural resources. The workshop was successful in receiving technical input on the planning process through a series of breakout sessions covering air, water, geologic resources, landscape, vegetation, wildlife, invertebrates, and rare, threatened, and endangered species. Participants continued to build on the work of the Science Advisory Committee (SAC), prioritizing the region's most significant resources, their threats, ecological effects, and potential vital signs to monitor ecosystem health. The results of the workshop were then integrated into the first two chapters (Phase I) of the network's Monitoring Plan. In addition, a Monitoring Workshop Report is being written and will be completed sometime next month.

An offer was extended for members of the I & M team to go to any interested parks to present information about the I & M Program to park staff.

Action Items:

(1) Determine at what point the BOD would like to approve the Monitoring Plan.

Dianne Ingram stated that she would like the SAC (or at least the resource managers) to have the opportunity to review the Phase I and Phase II drafts of the Monitoring Plan.

Dan Sealy concurred with this suggestion. Marcus Koenen agreed to send an e-mail to the SAC members to let them know that the Phase I draft is complete and available for review if they would like to make comments. Comments will be accepted until November 15, 2002. If comments are received that are difficult to reconcile, a BOD meeting will be called to discuss the comments and determine what changes need to be made to the plan. This same process will be repeated in April 2003, when the Phase II draft is complete. Karen Cucurullo suggested that the BOD review the plan after the Phase II draft has been reviewed by the SAC and their comments have been incorporated. All Board members agreed upon this timeline.

(2) Decide whether a representative from the Appalachian Trail (Pam Underhill, Superintendent), should join the BOD.

Dan Sealy was concerned that allowing the Superintendent for Appalachian Trail onto the BOD would bring in more competition for I & M funding. Ellen Gray said that it was her understanding that there would be additional funding for any monitoring activities at the Appalachian Trail (The AT is already funded separately for biological inventories). All Board members then agreed that it was appropriate to add Pam Underhill to the BOD.

III. Network Permits

Network permits allow a researcher to obtain one permit covering multiple parks.

Action Item:

Decide whether or not to pursue a network permit.

At the last BOD meeting, it was requested that input be received from the resource managers prior to the Board making a decision on whether or not to approve the usage of a network permit. John Sinclair, Inventories Coordinator, had circulated the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) developed by the Northern Colorado Plateau Network for their network permit program to the NCN park resource managers so that they could decide whether or not they were in support of starting the program in NCN. Catoctin Mountain Park and George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) decided that they did not want to participate in the network permit program. Catoctin expressed concerns about security issues. Dan Sealy said that GWMP was concerned that by adding another level of communication (the network permit coordinator), we would just be adding confusion. All other parks in the network were interested in starting a NCN permit.

Ellen Gray mentioned that a search on the IAR/permits website for a specific park will not show network projects. Dianne Ingram said that perhaps giving the projects dummy numbers would fix this problem. Board members agreed that allowing for network permits would not make much difference in their workloads, but that if it was likely to

encourage research in the parks, then they were in support of it. Ellen Gray added that any park can be added to or removed from the MOA at any time if they should change their decision. A revised MOA for NCN, excluding Catoctin and GWMP, was distributed to the Board members for review (Attachment 1). The Board decided that it was in favor of a network permit. Before the permit will be circulated for signature, it was decided that further discussions with CATO and GWMP would be initiated to be sure of their decision.

IV. Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan (AARWP)

Ellen Gray provided copies of the AARWP to the Board members and reviewed the document briefly.

Action Item:

Approve or disapprove the AARWP.

Dan Sealy asked whether monies spent by the parks on projects that benefit the I & M Program are documented in the budget section of the AARWP. Ellen Gray informed him that they were not. Dan expressed a desire to see park expenditures on projects to benefit the I & M Program reported somewhere to show evidence of the parks' support of the program. John Howard expressed concern that parks would be responsible for reporting monitoring projects funded at the regional level and that the blame would then fall on the park superintendents if those projects were not completed on time.

The Board decided that they would like a week or two to review the AARWP and make editorial comments but that they did not foresee the necessity of any changes to the content of the report. Members voted to approve the report with the caveat that editorial changes may still be made after Board members have the opportunity to review the document.

V. Other items

(1) Marcus Koenen asked for suggestions on how to encourage more attendance at the BOD meetings. Dan Sealy also expressed the importance of gaining the support of the Superintendents to the future of the I & M Program. Doug Curtis suggested a call or e-mail a few days prior to each meeting to remind Board members that the meeting was coming up and to encourage them to send a delegate if they would be unable to attend. Brian Carlstrom agreed that a call would likely help to increase attendance. Dianne Ingram suggested that Marcus also ask for e-mail confirmation from members who are planning to attend so that he may better know how many members to expect.

(2) Jim Sherald, Chief of Natural Resources and Science for NCR, announced that Ellen Gray would be leaving the I & M Program after October to become a full-time mother. Jim expressed his gratitude for the hard work and exemplary leadership that Ellen has provided during her three years as the NCR I & M Coordinator. The vacancy announcement for her position should be posted in the near future.

Memorandum of Agreement

Research Permitting Process for Inventory and Monitoring Projects National Capital Network

Background and Purpose

In response to the Natural Resource Challenge and an increased emphasis on science based management of natural resources, the National Park Service has created 32 networks of parks linked by geography and shared natural resource characteristics to facilitate collaboration, information sharing, and economies of scale in natural resource management. The National Capital Region (NCRO) is comprised of 12 park units in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia: Antietam National Battlefield (ANTI), Catocin Mountain Park (CATO), Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (CHOH), George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (HAFE), Manassas National Battlefield Park (MANA), Monocacy National Battlefield (MONO), National Capital Parks – Central (NACC), National Capital Parks - East (NACE), Prince William Forest Park (PRWI), Rock Creek National Park (ROCR), and Wolf Trap Farm Park (WOTR).

The purpose of this agreement is to describe and agree to an operational structure and procedure for processing research permits for inventory and monitoring projects identified in the inventory and monitoring study plans of the National Capital Network (NCN). This agreement will pertain only to projects organized and funded by the network. All other research requests will be routed through the normal process at individual park units. Most individual network research projects will involve multiple park units (up to 12 at a time). This process aims to offer a streamlined and effective process that will facilitate working with investigators across multiple park units, while maintaining the highest level of individual park involvement in the process.

Network Research Permit Process

To implement the process described below, the NCN, Regional Inventory and Monitoring Program Coordinator is given the authority to assume the role of the “Research Coordinator” for the network projects. The Superintendent serving as Chair of the NCN Board of Directors is delegated the authority to approve/disapprove network inventory and monitoring project research permits on behalf of all 12 park units in the network.

Step 1. Submit Application. Using the web-based Research Permit and Reporting System (RPRS) the Principle Investigator (PI) submits an application under the NCN code. The PI also provides an electronic copy of the proposed study plan at the time the application is submitted. The Regional Inventory and Monitoring Program Coordinator (Research Coordinator) is notified by the RPRS that the application has been received.

Step 2. Review and Process Application. The Research Coordinator forwards the application and study plan via e-mail to all parks proposed for inclusion in the network

I&M study and requests review and input. Parks are asked to provide: a recommendation on whether or not the project should be implemented; specific conditions that the park wants to have added to the permit; and information on any other specific issues or concern. The Research Coordinator will work, as needed, with individual parks and groups of parks in resolving any specific questions or issues that are raised during the review process.

Step 3. Prepare and Issue Permit. If the proposed study has the support of all involved parks then the Research Coordinator proceeds with compiling the research permit and associated materials. Final written or electronic approval of the proposal from each involved park Superintendent or their designee is required. The permit is accompanied by three sets of conditions: general permit conditions; network permit conditions (all communication/coordination based) and park specific permit conditions. The permit form is then completed and a network study number assigned. Once assembled, the Chair of the NCN Board of Directors (with delegated authority) will sign the permit. The permit is then forwarded to the PI for final signature.

Step 4. Follow-up Communication with Parks. Once the final signed copy of the permit is returned from the PI, the Research Coordinator will then distribute copies of the signed permit package to all pertinent parks. Throughout the course of the study the Research Coordinator maintains communication with the individual parks and the PI on matters related to permit administration.

Step 5. Program Records. The Research Coordinator is responsible for maintaining official documentation and files of research permits issued at the network level.

Step 6. Investigator Annual Reports. The Research Coordinator works with the PI to ensure that Investigator Annual Report (IARs) are completed for each research project. Parks are notified when IARs have been completed and are available for viewing on the website.

It is recognized that a successful network level process requires close coordination and good communication. Therefore, maintaining thorough and regular communication between the network, parks, and PIs will be emphasized at all times.

General Provisions

Term of Agreement. This agreement will remain in effect for five years from the date of the last signature. Any signatory may withdraw from the agreement upon notification of all other signatories.

Amendments. Any signatories may propose changes to this agreement. Any change will be in the form of an amendment, and will not take effect until all signatories have agreed to and signed the amendment.

Approval Signatures

John Howard, Superintendent, Antietam and Monocacy National Battlefields	Date
Doug Faris, Superintendent, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park	Date
Don Campbell, Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park	Date
Robert Sutton, Superintendent, Manassass National Battlefield Park	Date
Arnold Goldstein, Superintendent, National Capital Parks/Central	Date
John Hale, Superintendent, National Capital Parks/East	Date
Robert Hickman, Superintendent, Prince William Forest Park	Date
Adrienne Coleman, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park	Date
William Crockett, Superintendent, Wolf Trap Farm Park	Date